IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to have the status and content indicated in the following listing of claims, wherein any cancellation of claims is made *without prejudice*.

1. (Currently amended) A method for the preparation of a vaccine composition comprising recombinant or synthetic gelatin as a stabiliser, said method comprising the steps of:

reducing the water content of the vaccine composition to be below 2 weight percent; and

maintaining the water content below 2 weight percent for at least 2 years.

2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 in which the recombinant gelatin is homodisperse.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 in which the molecular weight of the recombinant gelatin is in a range selected from the group consisting of between 2.5 and 50 kD, between 2.5 and 30 kD, and between 2.5 and 15 kD.

4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 in which the molecular weight of the recombinant gelatin is in a range selected from the group consisting of between 5 and 10 kD, and between 6 and 8 kD.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein any two of the amino acid sequences of the peptides constituting said recombinant or synthetic gelatin when optimally aligned by the program GAP or BESTFIT using default parameters, share at least 80 percent sequence identity.

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 in which the lifetime is the time from production to the moment of use of the composition.

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the lifetime is the period of storage of the composition.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the water content is maintained below 2 weight percent to prevent crystallization of the recombinant or synthetic gelatin for at least 7 years.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein maintaining the water content below 2 weight percent during the lifetime of the vaccine composition comprises providing the composition in a sufficiently moisture-tight container.

10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein maintaining the water content below 2 weight percent during the lifetime of the vaccine composition comprises providing the composition in a sufficiently air-tight container.

11. (Withdrawn – currently amended) A vaccine composition comprising recombinant gelatin as a stabiliser, wherein said composition has a water content of less than 2 weight percent and is stored to maintain the water content of the vaccine composition below 2 weight percent for at least 2 years.

12. (Withdrawn – previously presented) A vaccine composition according to claim 11 which is at least 3 months old.

13. (Previously presented) Method for the preparation of a vaccine composition comprising recombinant or synthetic gelatin as a stabiliser, said method comprising the steps of (a) producing recombinant or synthetic gelatin, (b) adding

said recombinant or synthetic gelatin to a vaccine to provide the vaccine composition, and (c) lyophilizing the vaccine composition with sufficient drying to prevent crystallisation of the recombinant gelatin during the lifetime of the vaccine composition.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Withdrawn – previously presented) A vaccine composition according to claim 11, wherein any two of the amino acid sequences of the peptides constituting said recombinant or synthetic gelatin when optimally aligned by the program GAP or BESTFIT using default parameters, share at least 80 percent sequence identity.

16. (Currently amended) A method for the preparation of a pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one therapeutic protein and further comprising recombinant or synthetic gelatin as a stabiliser, said method comprising the steps of:

reducing the water content of the pharmaceutical composition to be below 2 weight percent; and

maintaining the water content below 2 weight percent for at least two years.

17. (Withdrawn – currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one therapeutic protein and further comprising recombinant or synthetic gelatin as a stabiliser, wherein said composition has a water content of less than 2 weight percent and is stored to maintain the water content of the vaccine composition below 2 weight percent for at least 2 years.

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2 in which the molecular weight of the recombinant gelatin is in a range selected from the group consisting of between 2.5 and 50 kD, between 2.5 and 30 kD, and between 2.5 and 15 kD.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2 in which the molecular weight of the recombinant gelatin is in a range selected from the group consisting of between 5 and 10 kD, between 6 and 8 kD.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein any two of the amino acid sequences of the peptides constituting said recombinant or synthetic gelatin when optimally aligned by the program GAP or BESTFIT using default parameters, share at least 80 percent sequence identity.

21. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the reducing step comprises freeze drying the vaccine composition and keeping the temperature below a calculated glass transition temperature of the vaccine composition during freeze drying.

22. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the maintaining step comprises sealing the vaccine composition in an air- and moisture-tight container under an oxygen-free gas or under vacuum.

23. (New) The method according to claim 13, wherein the lyophilizing step comprises reducing the water content of the vaccine composition to be below 2 weight percent.

24. (New) The method according to claim 13, wherein the lyophilizing step comprises storing the dried vaccine composition and ensuring that the water

content of the vaccine composition remains below 2 weight percent during storage.

25. (New) The method according to claim 13, wherein the lyophilizing step comprises freezing the vaccine composition in the sol state.